



# Santa Maria-Bonita School District

David M. Francis  
Superintendent

SOUZA STUDENT SUPPORT CENTER  
708 South Miller Street  
Santa Maria, CA 93454-6230

September 10, 2008

To: The Federal Communications Commission  
From: David M. Francis, Superintendent  
Re: CC Docket No. 02-06

On behalf of the students, parents, staff and Board of Education of the Santa Maria-Bonita School District, I'd like to go on record to state that our district lends its strong support to the proposed addition of "telephone broadcast messaging" to the list of services eligible for support under the schools and libraries ("E-rate") program.

Our district and schools have used a telephone messaging system for more than a year and have found it to be extremely useful in informing parents about important issues affecting their children's education and in increasing parent participation. Our schools use the system to share information with parents about meetings and events, changes in the school schedule, field trip delays, emergency issues, attendance requirements and academic achievements. Several of our schools use the system to call students with homework information and recordings of Language Arts assignments so the students can listen while they read along.

Improving communication between educators, students and parents plays a vital role in improving educational performance in our schools. Telephone broadcast messaging offers significant advantages and benefits over the less efficient means which schools have traditionally used to reach out to students and parents, such as hand-delivered written notices.

We recently sent a district-wide phone message to all families reminding them of the first School Site Council meeting of the school year. More than 600 parents over what we anticipated showed up! Our students' parents have come to rely on our telephone broadcast messaging system to keep them informed. Many of them do not have the time or the written language skills to read every flyer or note that is sent home. A verbal message sent in a timely manner is extremely effective with our family population. Continuing to provide this telephone messaging service to our families is a priority for our district. Unfortunately, current and future budget cuts from the state and federal governments might force us to have to reconsider our priorities.

Telephone broadcast messaging, which allows schools to more efficiently and effectively communicate with students and parents, is a prime example of an emerging technology that should be included within the E-rate program's list of eligible services.

Sincerely,

David M. Francis, Superintendent

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